

THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

WEBINAR

TEACHERS AT THE FRONTLINES OF CLIMATE CHANGE

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MORRIS: Greetings to everyone across continents and time zones, and welcome. Thank you for joining us for today's webinar, "Teachers at the Front Lines of Climate Change." On behalf of the Center of Universal Education at the Brookings Institution, I'm delighted to see participants joining us from around the world today for today's important conversation.

Climate change is a growing climate crisis and a global crisis. It is already shaping the daily realities of teaching and learning in communities around the world. Schools in all corners of the globe are increasingly having to pause or to close because of extreme temperatures, floods, fires, tropical storms, to name a few of the challenges.

UNICEF estimates that more than a billion children are exposed to multiple climate hazards, with impacts to children's physical and mental health and wellbeing, and their learning. Today's conversation will focus on what is actually working in classrooms, what teachers still need, and how stronger networks of collaboration can allow students to thrive in Eastern and Southern Africa.

The Center for Universal Education has been a thought partner on issues related to climate education, and in 2024, the Center for Universal Education launched a partnership with CARE Zimbabwe to work together to advance research on the state of education and climate change in five countries across Eastern and Southern Africa.

Today's event is a product of this multi-year collaborative research. It is now my pleasure to introduce our moderator for today's panel, Dr. Ellen Chigwanda. Ellen is a senior technical advisor for education and climate change at CARE Zimbabwe, and serves as a project director for the Center for Universal Education's collaborative research partnership on education and climate change.

She is also a 2016 Echidna global scholar. Ellen brings deep expertise at the intersection of education and climate resilience in Zimbabwe, but also globally, and we are so grateful to have Ellen with us here today to lead today's discussion. Ellen, thank you so much, and over to you

CHIGWANDA: Thank you so much, Emily, for setting us up for today's webinar. Good afternoon everyone from Harare, and it's so, such a pleasure to have all of you joining us today.

I'm going to start us off by just introducing our panelists who are joining us from four countries in East and Southern Africa. I'll start off with Abdikadir Ismail, who is a board member of Asante Africa Foundation and is joining us from Kenya. Abdikadir, I'm also introducing to you Peter Jack who is the head of training and support at Teach For Zimbabwe, joining us from Zimbabwe. Peter, welcome. I'm also introducing you to Rodgers Kabamba, who is the program manager at Right To Play joining us from Rwanda. Welcome, Rodgers. And last but certainly not least, I'm introducing you to Edmond Shoniwa, who is the monitoring and evaluation head at the Forum for African Women Educationalists in Zimbabwe, FAWEZI who is joining us from Zimbabwe. Welcome, Edmond. So thank you so much to our panelists who are going to be sharing with us their expertise around climate education from their different contexts.

And I'm going to start off start us off with Abdikadir who is joining us from Asante Africa Foundation. So Abdikadir, I know in Samburu schools sometimes double up as rescue camps during droughts and disasters. So maybe, may you tell us how do teachers manage

that dual role, and what does it cost the classroom when this happens? Over to you, Abdikadir.

ISMAIL: Thank you very much for granting me, granting me an opportunity to share. We understand that all of us are living in a situation where such, such things that affect us do happen, and teachers have to play a very pivotal role. In our case, we become coordinators, we become counselors, and we become welfare officers and community leaders in such situations.

You, you will have to help organize the issues of the relief. You will have to account for the learners. You'll have to provide for psychological support and to also reassure their families. All of these while trying at the same time to ensure there is some form of learning. One, one of the things that does happen is this is an opportunity to learn because you have been brought exactly into climate change classroom in real-life situation.

So now you get an opportunity to talk practically about what things happen. What, what, what happens. If it is because of floods, if it is because of the drought, if it is because of insecurity, now you can bring that in and it becomes a topic of discussion with your learners so that they can at least get some sense of understanding because it is a just-in-time form of learning.

The cost to education is significant. Definitely la- lessons will be interrupted because classrooms will become occupied, and then the learning materials will be displaced. Teachers will spend less time teaching because now we will sp- we'll be spending more time talking to the community members, maybe providing some social support and all that.

And that will make... And, and the learners themselves are also experiencing some form of trauma, so getting them to understand at that particular time might not be very easy. At that particular time, I think the Maslow's is more important than what we are talking about in terms of the Bloom's taxonomy, the teaching, the learning, the knowledge, the understanding.

We need first to deal with the basic, the basics that they require. One lesson we have learned from such thing is that disaster preparedness in itself must include education continuity plans where we have temporary learning spaces or flexible timetables and support systems that allow schools to continue teaching, while at the same time serving the humanitarian needs.

Thank you.

CHIGWANDA: Thank you. Thank you so much. It's very interesting to see the role that the teacher has to play even in a situation where they themselves are also experiencing and facing the, the climate crisis. Thank you so much, Abdikadir. I'm gonna skip over to Zimbabwe and bring in Peter on the line. Peter, I know that the Teach For Zimbabwe model places fellows in marginalized communities of districts such as Chiredzi which are already facing sev- severe climate impacts.

So the fellows who are working in Chiredzi's most climate-affected schools, may you walk us through one practice that fellows use in order to keep a hungry, overheated classroom engaged. How are these fellows... I know they, you know, double up as maybe teaching assistants. W- what are some of the ways in which they're helping to keep schoolchildren in

classrooms engaged, even in the face of, of, you know, you know, hunger as well as you know, extreme temperatures and other impacts of climate change?

JACK: Thank you, Ellen, and good afternoon, everyone. So we, we have been trying to work very hard to address the situation in the lowveld. Like we said there is quite very high temperatures in the, in, in that region. And, Crops don't grow. And while at the same time people depend on food or, or on rain for food, which means there is always scarcity of food.

And because of that people seem to, to have nothing to feed their children. And for, for our teachers now, so when they get to schools, they-- you realize that the s- the classrooms are half, sometimes even a quarter of the learners come to school. So they then create what we call nutritional gardens.

And in this nutritional garden, during the rain season, they try as much as possible to employ this conservative agriculture from Vudza, where they then grow vegetables, grow maize, grow wheat, and these drought-resistant crops with the learners. They don't do it on their own. They do it with the learners, and they do it as part of their learning.

So the, as the, the learners are learning, they are also producing for themselves. And at the end of the season, they harvest this food, and it is what then they use for, to provide a wet meal or a school meal with that. And during the whole week, the, the, the whole year, they continue to, to maintain the nutritional garden, providing vegetables and other things that they need to, to do.

They do a lot of conduct-- conservative conservative activity and with their learners and teaching, also bringing in their parents so that their parents also have got an idea of what is happening. When they see it happening in the school, they also know that it is possible to happen in their locations at their home.

So they also practice the same at their home. So our schools are then turned into sort of like, climate education hubs where the, where the fellow does everything with the learners, and then the communities can come and see what the fellow is doing, and they can replicate that same thing in their, at their homes in the community.

So there is also food at home. There is also food at school. And thus the learners has got food. Well, it's so hot, it's so difficult, but they know when they come to school there is a wet meal. When they go back home, the mother has also learned how to do it, and there is they are assured of a meal at home.

Thank you.

CHIGWANDA: Thank you so much, Peter. Interesting to see how the fellows are really taking climate change, you know, within their stride and, you know, making sure that they are implementing climate-smart agricultural practices that help not only to teach the learners, but also to ensure that they can, you know, continue to have something to eat even in the face of a climate c-crisis.

Now we head over to, to Rwanda where we're going to talk to Rodgers. Rodgers, I know Right To Play is implementing very interesting work in a district that is on the fault line near Lake Kivu in a mountainous terrain. And this area is highly disaster-prone, and that in 2023

the district suffered a catastrophic flood and landslides that damaged homes and schools and also displaced children.

Now, when schools or when classes resume after such a disaster, w-what do teachers do in order to help students to feel safe enough to, to learn again?

KABAMBA: Thank you. Thank you, Ellen, and good afternoon everyone here from Rwanda. What I can say for that question, actually, I can say that when that happened in twenty twenty-three, the floods and landslides that we had even the volcano erupt some days back before that. And of course schools were damaged, the communities were dis- were washed away.

Like, children had to have, had to transfer from school to schools. And of course we are also had some different issues, not only the infrastructure, but also psychosocial wellbeing. We are not actually physical and mentally fit. And before actually how the teachers actually could supported the learners to make sure that they are actually academically confident and, and are able now to go back to their, their normal life is firstly, as as, as my colleagues were saying, first we have to go to a, a blocks a blocksonomy.

I mean, where we need first deal with the basic needs before we go to the academics and so forth. And that academic needs where we, we actually worked with the government and local authorities to provide some scholastic materials for the children, first of all. And to get where they are, they, where they should share a shelter.

And after that, also we had some, we had trainings for the teachers actually. How do you handle such a kind of students who are academically stuck, who don't have any learning materials, who have lost their own friends, now moving to another environment? And then you first need... We, we had to first prepare the teachers.

How do you handle such a kind of situation? And after that, then we went into the classroom settings whereby we actually worked with the teachers to go back to our curriculum. How do we identify some of the issues within our climate surroundings? How do we deal with, how do we deal with them? So in that context, actually we, we, we, we, we had to sit together, and then we identi- we identified some of the topics that actually are normally affecting our, our, our environment.

And then after that, now currently how the teacher has been working is they, in the classroom they teach climate education with much training that they received from Right To Play. But then afterwards, because classrooms time is always limited. But then we had to make clubs student clubs at schools where the children actually come together after the classroom and now discuss further what are the challenges, how can we, how can we address the challenges.

And then with that, we actually have in, in, in our countries, we know that we normally have limited resources in terms of education and climate but also the textbooks and whatever. But for us in Rwanda, the government provided what they call Radio Class or, or, or what we call offline servers where the teachers can make a research and then they upload the content to the Radio Class and then afterwards they- Through the clubs, children come together.

They, they also go through make a research from the virtual class that has been uploaded by the teachers so that they can find a better way to solve their problems. But also beyond

that, they go into the communities. For example, if they're discussing on the on the, on the landslide, how can we avoid landslide?

Maybe through plantation or maybe afforestation. Then they also get some, some seeds. They go with the community to plant on a specific amount and is why they say they normally have landslides and, and, and floods. So that's what I can say that we normally we, we implement currently in Rwanda through that project called Girls for Climate Education.

Actually, in our project, we normally we are working with the children both boys and girls, but with a focus of empowering girls, how do they deal with the climate education, because we know that most of the times girls are more affected when it come to the displacements and, and so forth. Yeah.

Thank you.

CHIGWANDA: Thank you so much, Rodgers, for sharing that experience from Rwanda, and it, it dovetails very well into the question that I have for Edmond, who's in Zimbabwe. Edmond, I know Fawezi is working in Chitungwiza, which is an urban, peri-urban site that you studied for the gender dimensions of climate impacts on teaching and learning.

I also know that Fawezi's lens is really very much focused on gender responsive delivery. Maybe for our webinar audience, Edmond, can you share one example of a, a concrete change that teachers in Co- in Chitungwiza have had to make you know, in terms of their teaching or classroom management because of how differently climate change affects girls and boys?

SHONIWA: Thank you, Ellen, and greetings everyone. So one of the strongest messages that emerged from the Chitungwiza study is that climate change is not gender neutral, and therefore our response in schools cannot be gender neutral either. While climate shocks affect all learners, girls and boys experience those shocks differently because of existing gender roles and expectations.

So to respond to your question, a very practical example is what happens during prolonged heat and water shortages. You find out that in many households, particularly in peri-urban communities like Chitungwiza, girls carry a disproportionate responsibility for collecting water, caring for younger siblings, preparing meals, and other, undertaking other domestic chores.

Those responsibilities increase when climate change reduces water availability. So the study that we conducted also highlighted that girls lose valuable study time because of these additional responsibilities, which increases absenteeism and exposing them to, to, to, to greater risks of dropping out from school or even entering early early marriages.

So traditionally, teachers may have interpreted late arrival, incomplete homework or irregular attendance simply as a discipline issue. But what we are encouraging and what many teachers are already beginning to do now is to look beyond the behavior and ask what climate-related barriers might be affecting this learner.

That changes classroom practice significantly. I will give you an example. Teachers are becoming more flexible in providing opportunities for girls who have missed lessons to catch

up without embarrassment. They are using collaborative learning approaches where peers support one another rather than allowing absence to become a permanent learning gap.

Teachers are also becoming more intentional about creating safe classroom spaces where girls feel comfortable discussing the challenges they face without fear, without judgment, without embarrassing them. And most importantly, gender-responsive teaching is not only about supporting girls, it is also about engaging boys.

Teachers have an opportunity to challenge harmful gender stereotypes by encouraging boys to participate equally in environmental activities, water conservation initiatives and school cleanup campaigns while promoting discussions around shared household responsibilities. So when boys understand that climate impacts are unequally distributed, they become allies rather than bystanders.

Lastly, at Fawezi, we see this as moving from equality to equity. Equality, as you know, means treating every learner the same, whilst equity, as I know you and the members o-- a-- a-- are in this platform know, equity means recognizing that different learners experience different barriers and providing the support they need to achieve the same educational outcomes.

And ultimately, gender-responsive climate education is not about lowering standards. It is about removing barriers so that climate change does not determine who succeeds in school or not. Thank you.

CHIGWANDA: Thank you so much, Edmond. Those are very interesting insights from Chitungwiza, where teachers are really starting to understand the gendered impacts of climate change and applying those as part of their classroom management to ensure that both boys and girls can continue to learn, not necessarily by reducing standards, but essentially taking into account some of those nuances that are presented by our climate and climate change in terms of, you know, teaching and learning.

So thanks so much for sharing those. And I'm gonna come back to Kenya, Abdikadir. I know that Asante Africa Foundation's model also positions schoolchildren as agents of change and they are involved in tree planting, rainwater harvesting, as well as the growing of drought-resistant crops.

What is the role of the teacher in getting some of these activities that center schoolchildren as agents of change started? And also, what is the role of the teacher in sustaining some of these interesting activities that are being implemented in Kenya?

ISMAIL: Thank you very much. An interesting question.

Now for the purpose of our audience, I think if you are to look at the satellite view and pull out the Google Map to see where Samburu is, you, you will see dry savanna scrubland, brown tan terrain with sparse vegetables. You, you will see virtually a climate lesson, a climate story. Now, this is something that our, our students live through, so they do not need to be introduced to it because they live in it, they survive it.

They see how when, when we don't have water the, the, the water points become a source of conflict. They see how their herds have thinned. So for, for us as teachers, we, we are not

there to provide the knowledge. The knowledge is already there with the learners. We are acting as a bridge here for the climate action.

Now that we have the knowledge, what action are we taking? So students will rarely become the, the, the champions on their own. They need someone, they need a mentor, and that is the role of the teacher now, to mentor them into and, and guide them into consistent practices that are sustainable. What we do with Asante Africa is that we want to show climate education not as an one-off activity, maybe by telling students just to plant trees.

No. We, we empower our teachers because the teachers will try to integrate this into their teaching, into their daily practice. Because resilience is not built once, but it is built by daily activities. So what we do is we try to bring them into ownership. You see, before you can, you can do ownership, you need authorship.

So if the students understand, and they know this is the problem that we are facing, and then you, you as a teacher guide them towards what it is that we'll do. If it is the planting of trees, if it is taking care of the environment, just like, Jack mentioned, starting a vegetable garden. When they see the results, it becomes embedded in them, and then they will now pick it up, and they become champions on their own.

So we first need to introduce it to them, and the school is the safest place to introduce any of this. For example, if you, if you are trying a, a vegetable garden, at home maybe they will not get the consistency. Maybe there is lack of water. But at the school they have it. So they have an opportunity within the school to fail and fail better even next time, and fail even better until when they do it right.

By the time they are out, they are champions in the environment. They are time- champions within the society. So what I will say is resilience is not taught in one lesson. It is built through daily habits, and that is what the teacher, that what the teacher's role is according to us. Thank you very much.

CHIGWANDA: Wow. Thank you, Abdikadir. Resilience is not taught in one lesson, but it's through the daily habits that are lived by the school learners and the teachers act as mentors. Thank you, Abdi Kadir. That's, it's very, very interesting, and I'm sure our audience is finding, you know, all of these insights very, very useful you know, and to see how they can also adapt and adopt some of your experiences into their own lived realities.

I'm gonna come back to Chiredzi, Peter. The research as I was skimming through some of the findings of the research, it really described climate change as a phenomenon that is forcing families to, you know, abandon farming, to migrate into neighboring countries, South Africa, Botswana, and other countries, and to also leave child-headed households behind.

So for Teach For Zimbabwe, how does that show up for a teacher on an ordinary Monday morning in Chiredzi? How are all these effects of climate change, you know, the, you know, abandoning, you know, their traditional farming migrating to other countries, leaving child-headed households behind, how is that really showing up for a teacher in Chiredzi on an ordinary Monday morning?

JACK: Thank you, Ellen. And like you said, this is a very difficult situation. For a teacher, you get to school, then you see Most of the, the girls, they are not in school. A lot of children

are coming to school on an empty stomach. They have not taken any, anything. And some of them, they are not concentrating though that they have come.

They are not concentrating because maybe they have come on an empty stomach they... It's also hot. So it's really difficult. There, there is a, a very serious challenge, especially of child-headed families. Those that are coming to school are also taking, are also taking care of their young ones that they are also bringing to school.

Now you realize that there is a high level of absenteeism. Even those that they, that come, eventually they also cannot come in time. They are late because they are supposed to be taking care of the other. So it's really a very big -- a, a very difficult situation in Chiredzi, where if even if they try to grow it's really...It's, it's, they hardly get anything out of what they, they grow in the field. And because the economy is built mainly on, on farming and on rainwater, that's eventually they cannot stop these things. They cross over to South Africa, where the jobs are not even easy to get.

So they go there, and the families are left without parents, without anyone to take care of them. Most of them come to school without shoes, without a complete uniform, and this is a very difficult situation for the teachers. The, the school regulations require that require that the teachers, the, the learners be fully equipped, wear the, a complete uniform. But the learners are coming into classrooms without a complete uniform, and the teacher has to s-look into that.

But though we, we, we, we have been trying our best, trying our level best to ensure that we try and help these kids somehow. Of course, we have partnerships with a number of organizations that then provide scholarships, because some of... Most of them actually do not pay the school fees that is required in schools.

So thus there is a sizable or a very small number of learners coming into the classrooms. And if the, the teacher does not take action to help the learner to acquire the uniform, the school fees, and to provide the feeding, then the learners may not come to school. They may not even concentrate since they do all these things, stakeholder engagement, partnership to try and To mobilize resources for, for the learners.

They do the nutrition gardens to try and to provide their food for the learners. So it's really difficult, but we are trying to work on that so that it actually works.

CHIGWANDA: Thank you. Thank you so much, Peter. I think this webinar really, the objective is really to show the role, the s- scale and scope of the role that teachers are playing on the front lines of climate change and some of the daily challenges and, you know, situations that they're faced with, that they have to deal with, and most times without enough preparation, without enough resources without enough support to address some of those issues.

Thank you so much Peter, for sharing all the way from Chiredzi in Zimbabwe. I'm gonna go back to Rwanda. Rodgers, I know that Right To Play your model really uses, it emphasizes the importance of play to support both climate literacy and psychosocial recovery. Maybe for the sake of our audience, can you walk us through what a play-based approach to climate education looks like, and what it accomplishes that a standard lesson may not be able to do?

KABAMBA: Yeah. Thank you, Ellen. I can say at Right to Play, of course, we empower and educate through play as one of our niche as Right to Play as organization. But now how does play support in this context? Because when we are, when we are starting, we are, all of us discussing how climate does not only affect the infrastructure, but also affects wellbeing and psychosocial of the children.

And then doing that, I can imagine if a children is -- if, if their home is displaced, if they're starting with new colleagues that are not familiar with, if they don't have any learning environment. I mean, learning and teaching materials that they had. Maybe they're displaced or maybe they are washed away by the floods or water, whatever.

And now, they are miserable. Maybe they are angry. Like they are, they are not in a mood of, of feeling that they are, they are at school. Now, this is where now play comes in. And how does it come in actually? How does it support? It's when you go into the classroom, firstly, how do we make sure that the teacher actually turns the classroom into engaging and interesting environment for the learners who have got all of, all of the problems?

So as Right to Play, how we do it, we normally have we prepare with the teachers. We, we make sure that we incorporate learning through play in what they are teaching. In every lesson, how do we make sure that you, you bring in, in play, but of course aligned with the objectives of the lesson. For, and then afterwards, maybe in the classroom, let's say maybe they're going to clubs.

How do you bring games? And how does the game support like cohesion, support trust among the teams, like support collaboration, like, and feeling, I mean, for these chil- I mean, for these children, feeling that they are in the society that actually accommodates them. So we, we, we use play as a tool to make sure that environment actually is safer, is inclusive and, and, and, and also engaging.

If a, a children came from home and feeling maybe disappointed, may- feeling not okay because maybe they, maybe they are displaced, they don't know what is going to happen next, next time. Maybe a lot of uncer- uncertain- uncertainties. But now you bring them, while teaching, you bring them in a mood that they are actually forgetting the outside environment.

So that actually they, they now build a new hope from that environment that they are in. For example, if you are, if you are organizing, let's say, a climate edu- climate maybe, let's say, a mathematics subject. How do you make sure that you bring in a play that actually still aligns with objectives, but at the same time brings student together to play?

Meaning that you, the teacher organizes a game that actually brings the learners to, to play, but with the purpose of learning. And then through, through that learning, actually they, they tap on the objectives, but they also build other, other life skills, communicating collaboration and, and a lot of life skills.

So with that life skills, actually, that's where you even develop the resiliency as my colleague Stella was saying. So meaning that a play has always been the best approach and it brings the learners together to forget. Of course, they might not, It's not a guarantee that w- when they are playing, maybe their problem will be taken away.

But through that playing, actually they, they, they, they come again to their common sense and think, and actually they develop new hope that actually will support them moving

forward. So, I can say, as I'm concluding, I can say we don't even use play only in the classroom, but we make sure also there is even play even outside the classroom.

And also through their clubs or the different activity they are doing, they make sure that they are actually playing. They are coming together. They are enjoying what they are doing, and actually they are solving at the same time their, their problems. So, that's briefly what I can say that approach that, that actually how the approach actually supports the learners to overcome their, their, their daily challenges regarding to the, to the climate change.

Thank you.

CHIGWANDA: Thank you. Thank you so much, Rodgers. I think that's, that's very interesting. And I found it very insightful to look at some of the findings from Rwanda and to learn a little bit more about - you know, the importance of play and how it, you know, dovetails into climate literacy, climate education, and how we can turn an otherwise difficult situation into, you know, a, an environment that enables you know, learners, both boys and girls, to continue to learn even in the face of a climate crisis.

So thank you so much for sharing. Edmond in Chitungwiza, I'm gonna read here one of the quotes that came from the study from an adolescent girl in a secondary school in Chitungwiza where you you know, collected data for this, for this research. This adolescent girl said, and I quote unavailability of water due to the heat makes us only take a, a half, a bath.

And so it makes us less confident in school." So the girl was really talking about how unavailability of water and the water shortages, how that leaves her feeling less confident in school. Now, for Fawesi, how much does something like that-- Is that something that a teacher can actually respond to, or is that something that has to be solved outside of the classroom?

SHONIWA: Thank you, Ellen that quotation struck many of us because it reminds us that climate change is not only an environmental issue, it is also a human dignity issue. Yes. The learner said that because of water shortages, she could not take a partial I mean, she could only take a partial bath before coming to school, making her feel less confident in class.

So at first glance, that might appear to be purely a water infrastructure problem, and indeed ensuring reliable access to clean water is fundamentally the responsibility of government local authority and to some extent development partners. Teachers cannot build bores or fix municipal water systems.

However, that is only one part of the story. Teachers may not be able to solve the water crisis, but they have enormous influence over whether that crisis eventually translates into educational exclusion or not. And a teacher who understands gender responsive practice notices a change in attendance, participation and confidence.

And rather than asking maybe a question like, "Why isn't this learner participating?" They begin asking, "Why might be-- what might be preventing this learner from participating?" That shift in mindset changes everything. Teachers can create psycho... emotionally safe classrooms, psychologically safe classrooms where learners are treated with dignity regardless of their circumstances.

They can prevent teasing or bullying linked to hygiene or appearance. They can check in privately they can check in maybe privately with learners who seem withdrawn. They can refer vulnerable learners to school counseling. In Zimbabwe, we do have guidance and counseling, GNC teachers. They can refer such learners.

They can also, in Zimbabwe we also do have child protection committees in schools, CPCs, which are learner-led, but are also guided by teachers who are trained in child protection. So such learners can also be referred to these clubs and these groups so that temporary absences caused by climate shocks do not become permanent learning losses.

Equally important, teachers can openly discuss climate change and gender in the classroom. Doing so, I believe helps learners understand that these challenges are shared societal issues rather than individual failures. When learners realize they are not alone, confidence often begins to return bit by bit.

And this is why I often say that climate resilience has two dimensions. The first is physical resilience, which is about water infrastructure, sanitation facilities, cooling classrooms, and resilient school infrastructure. But the most important as well the second one is social resilience, where we have teachers who can create classrooms characterized by empathy, inclusion, and emotional safety.

One without the other is incomplete. You need both physical resilience and social resilience. To conclude, let me say at, at Fawezi, we believe schools cannot solve climate change, but they can prevent climate change from permanently disrupting a learner's education. Sometimes the greatest contribution a teacher makes is helping a learner believe that despite difficult circumstances, they still belong, they are still valued, and they can still succeed.

And one of the flagship activities that Fawezi do is what we call gender responsive pedagogy training, GRP training, inculcating gender responsiveness in the mindset and in the daily practices of teachers. I will stop here and offer.

CHIGWANDA: Thank you so much. Thank you so much Edmond. And I can sense the passion and the, you know, absolute, you know, commitment coming through from your responses there coming all the way from, from Chitungwiza in Zimbabwe.

Thank you for sharing. And, and I know the, the research itself, one of the major findings was that school was identified as one of the most trusted sources for climate education. It was also identified as one of the most comfortable spaces by the adolescents themselves in terms of, you know, being able to help them to deal with the climate crisis.

So it's so important for us to be deliberating on the role of teachers and educators in, you know, ensuring that learners can continue to, you know, want to, you know, learn and to, you know, acquire education even as they face such difficult circumstances, including droughts, floods, extreme temperatures, and other such ills.

I want to thank you, the panel, for the questions that I've been asking and, you know, some of the responses you've been giving. And I know that we've been getting quite a few questions coming in from our audience from all over the world. So let's see if we can switch now to the Q&A so that we can also give an opportunity for you to respond to some of the questions that have come through from our audience.

And I'm gonna start with you, Peter because I have a question from Emily Echesa, who has sent us a question from London. And, and Emily is saying female teachers often experience the impacts of climate change differently from male teachers because climate-related risks interact with existing gender inequalities in many education systems.

So she's basically saying male teachers, female teachers, yes, the drought is the same, the flood is the same, the landslide is the same. But female teachers will experience the impacts of climate change differently from male teachers. Can you share, Peter, do you have any examples or some practical example from Chiredzi, Zimbabwe, where something like this has happened, or examples of how climate change is affecting female teachers differently from a male teacher just so that Emily can see whether, you know, these experiences, ha- the experiences from London are relatable to what is happening in Chiredzi, Zimbabwe.

JACK: Thank you, Ellen. This is a, a true story, and it's actually happening even now. It's not only about gender. There are also religious and traditional norms that are tied to, to, to those situations or those problems that teachers are facing. While they are teachers like their counter, their male counterparts They are also mothers, they are also sisters.

They've got this traditional role. In our local culture we say the family is the woman or the woman is the family. Yeah, or the woman is the home. So all the responsibilities of the home, of family are bestowed on the woman. She's the one who's supposed to see where the water is, and she's the one who's supposed to prepare the food.

But we are talking of a teacher now who is supposed to also be helping out in the classroom, teaching, and also helping the children that are affected with climate in, in, in with climate change. So this, this teacher has got a very big burden that they carry on themselves, taking care of the kids, taking care of the husband, taking care of the family, and they've also have religious and other traditional roles that they also carry on in the communities where they are.

That also puts more pressure on them as they do their day-to-day work. So you see that the role of a female teacher is even more difficult because of climate education. When there is no water, for example, the teacher, the female teacher has to be the mother who finds the water for, for a family before she even come, goes to school.

So she wants to go and fetch water very, at a very far away well, and then comes back, do the house chores, and then goes to school. That role of being a mother does not really leave them even when they are in school. They are s- they are also supposed to conduct that role of being motherly, and that is a, a traditional role that they cannot run away.

In as much as the the, the world is changing, it's not too, it's not very fast for, for the women. It's they, they still hold onto that role, and the community expect them to handle that motherly role even in schools, at home, and everywhere. So climate change has really affected the, the, the, the female teacher more significantly than the male teacher.

And it, it is very true in as much as we are pushing for... I like what FAWEZI is doing trying to bring equity, gender equity, but the traditional roles, the religious roles they are really impacting, putting more weight on the female teacher, and that's increasing their role when, when it come to helping the children or providing climate education or providing education during climate affected, in a climate affected zone.

Thank you.

CHIGWANDA: Thank you. Thank you. Thank you so much, Peter. I, I'm sure this is something that is a shared experience across all of the four contexts that we are reflecting upon today. Thank you so much. Rodgers, I might come to you in Rwanda. And maybe in, you know, two to three minutes you could share with us, you know, you've, you know, all of you have been talking about some of the challenges that the teachers are facing within the classroom, within the school and also, you know, how they're playing such a central role in not only promoting climate education, but also in navigating the climate crisis themselves.

So maybe from where you are sitting, how can we activate community members to support teachers in resource-constrained communities?

KABAMBA: Yeah. Thank you, Ellen. I think I would, I would like to echo from what Edmond said earlier, that schools cannot stop climate change, but they can prevent climate change.

And so also it is the same as communities. So communities also cannot stop, but they can try to prevent. And preventing meaning that they should work together hand-in-hand with the teachers. And how do they do this? Before actually they come in, they first need to be informed. They need awareness.

What is the climate change? What are the, what are the root causes? And what, how can we solve this issue? And maybe, I think firstly, the schools or the teachers can first oca- make organized kind of awareness, awareness among the communities, and try to identify some of the issues, of course, that are affecting their own communities.

And then actually, I would say also they should also go beyond awareness, but they also do into, put into practice, meaning that teachers and, and children together, maybe they can identify a specific problem that is affecting their communities, and then they find a way that they can bring the communities on board to work together on it.

For example, if you, if I share an example of climate issues in Rwanda, most especially in Rubavu District, where we mostly have landslides. Maybe if the, if the teachers can now identify with their, with their, with their children how, how are, what causes these la- landslides? How can we prevent landslides?

Maybe let's say they, they say maybe the solution is afforestation and, and they bring together the parents or the community together, and they also work towards addressing the, the, the, the, the landslides, meaning they can do planting or leveling where maybe there's no, no leveling. So through that, actually enga- engagement, it creates kind of ownership among the, from the communities.

So meaning that if they are aware, and then they are, they own actually climate issues and how to address them, I find a way, a better way that this, this community can actually can actually sort of the, I mean, can, can actually be on board with, with regard, with regards to the, to the climate. So then lastly, maybe I can, I can, I can say that maybe the community or the school surrounding should actually work with the local leaders and find or select some of the champions that actually continue taking forward the, the, the, the climate issues among the community.

Maybe they can be community leaders, or maybe it's trustworthy people in the community who can actually keep on educating, keep on advocating, and keep on bringing, I mean, actually bringing community how to address and how to, to prevent the, the, the, the, the climate issues. So I, I see in three aspects, maybe if I can stop there, I see it in firstly engagement, awareness and, and, and actually creating some champions that actually will take it forward.

Thank you.

CHIGWANDA: Thank you. Thank you so much, Rodgers. Abdi Kadir, I might come to you now. And sorry, I just wanted to make sure that I acknowledge Tiff Boyd from Colorado who shared the question around how we can activate the communities to, to support the teachers. We do have a question from Yeni Efisari who sent in a question from Indonesia.

Abdikadir, I might give this, this one to you. Yeni is asking, "How can teachers inspire environmental stewardship amongst children in the face of climate change, limited access to resources, and difficult circumstances?"

ISMAIL: Thank you very much. Just two quick responses to what my colleagues have said.

On, first, on the community, how we can work with the community. Remember, when you have defined roles, you can turn any bystander to become a partner. So it's very important to define the roles, even when we are working with the community. And then on the issue of the female teachers, I think two things struck me.

When we are talking about menstrual hygiene management, for example, it doesn't know your age. It doesn't say, "This is a girl, so I'll affect a girl and I'll not affect a teacher." A female teacher will be affected just like the way a girl is affected, just like the way a, a mother at home is affected. So when we have such situations, a female teacher might miss the school because of just a simple thing of menstrual hygiene.

And, and in, in my case, for example, in Samburu, we still have some cultural practices that are harmful. So in cases of climate induced disasters, we have risks of gender-based violence, and this can also affect the same women also. So the, the female teacher is, is carrying so many titles. On one hat, she is a female teacher. On the other hat, she's a woman. And, and these, they are affected. When the girls are married off when they are young, then the female teacher is the first person who will be responding to such situations. So I think all this play into that.

Now let me just come very quickly into how teachers can maintain learning how...The, the question that was posed to me is on, on how we can still inspire stewardship, right?

CHIGWANDA: Yeah.

ISMAIL: Yeah. So one is and I've said that we model behavior daily. You know, simple things like water conservation. Simple, simple things. Waste sorting. When, when you ensure that you don't put all the waste in the same basket. Tree planting. Rather than just teaching it in the theoretical aspect, do it every other day. The other one is you link the lesson to the local lived experiences or reality. Utilize any opportunity where, where a, a

climate-induced change has occurred. If it is drought, you have an opportunity because people are living in that situation at that particular time.

What they will learn at that time is no longer theoretical. It's practical. It's what they will do even at home. It's no longer abstract to them. Then you can also use low-cost or hands-on activities. Like, like the school garden might not cost much. Start it up. And planting the resilient crops. Clean up the, the, clean up drives within the school and outside the school and, and building a s- a sense of shared responsibility where you treat the students as active agents, not as passive recipients of knowledge.

We have been always been told the learner is not a tabula rasa. So they come with something. Utilize what they have. Thank you very much.

CHIGWANDA: Thank you. Thank you so much, Abdoul Karim. Like I said, I, I absolutely love the passion that comes through from each and every one of you just showing, you know, the level of investment that you have in this issue and particularly on, you know, teachers and the role that they're playing in the different contexts that we, that we're currently implementing.

I think the last question we will respond to is coming from Melissa Algreto Huerta, I hope I didn't mutilate that name from Indiana, and I'll hand this question over to you, Edmond. Now Melissa wants to know what policy changes do you think are most needed to help governments to support teachers who are facing the growing impacts of climate change?

So this is like a policy question. What should be government doing? What policy changes do, do government need to put in place in order to support teachers who are facing these growing impacts of climate change? In a minute or two, Edmond

SHONIWA: All right. Thank you, Ellen. Indeed this is perhaps the most important question because teachers cannot continue carrying the growing burden of climate change without strong policy support. In summary, I would say the first policy priority is to institutionalize climate change education within teacher training.

Climate education should not be an optional workshop offered once every few years. It should be embedded within the pre-service teacher education and the continuous professional development. Because every newly qualified teacher should graduate with the competencies in climate literacy, disaster risk reduction, and gender-responsive climate pedagogy, not just the subject knowledge.

That is what I would first underscore. Secondly, we need curriculum reform. Climate change should not remain confined to geography or agriculture. It should be integrated across subjects and taught using competence-based problem-solving approaches. Learners should leave the school ecosystem able to analyze climate challenges and contribute solutions within their own communities.

And maybe thirdly, governments and partners must invest in climate resilient schools. Why? Because I think, Ellen, teachers cannot effectively teach climate resilience while working in classrooms without reliable water, adequate sanitation, electricity, or safe learning environments. So climate resilient infrastructure is an educational investment, not simply an environmental one.

And maybe allow me to conclude with one thought which I think teachers are, are, are often described as being on the front lines of climate education, but I would want to go a step further. Teachers are not only on the front lines, they are among our most important climate adaptation investments.

Every teacher that we equip with the right knowledge, resources, and support has the potential to influence hundreds, to influence thousands across their career. So that is why investing in teachers is one of the smartest climate investments any country can make. Thank you.

CHIGWANDA: Wow. Wow, what a powerful, powerful way to, to conclude our, our webinar.

Thank you so much, Edmond. There you go. I think, you know, this, this is, this marks the end of our webinar, and I would just like to say, I think for you as the audience, you've really heard from our experts, our panelists, those that are on the ground implementing, you know, a-activities that are aimed at promoting not only climate education, but also ensuring that teachers are primed, teachers are trained, teachers are resourced in order to really be, you know, a non-negotiable part of climate adaptation in schools.

So, I'd also like to let you know that the research that all of these wonderful people were part of is currently in its final editing phase, and we are looking forward to, to launching this report hopefully towards the end of August or the very, very beginning of September. We'll also be working on a blog following this webinar, so look out for that blog, which will essentially harness and consolidate all of the different insights that we have received via this webinar.

I'd like now at this time to take the opportunity to thank all of the, you know, p-panelists. First of all, we'll start with Emily Morris. Thank you so much for coming in to give us the opening remarks. But I would really love to thank Abdikadir Ismail, who's joining us from Kenya; Rodgers Kabamba, who's joining us from Rwanda; Peter Jack, who's joining us from Chiredzi in Zimbabwe; and then Edmond Shoniwa, who is joining us from Chitungwiza in Zimbabwe.

I'd like to thank all of you for the passion, the commitment, and all of those very insightful experiences that you've shared, and I know that our audience has really, really benefited. I know I've benefited. Even being part of the research, I'm learning a new thing every day. So I'd like to thank you for, for your contributions and, of course, all of the time that took to, to prepare.

I'd also like to thank, you know, the team behind the scenes who helped this webinar to come into place. So thank you all so very much. Look out for, you know, other webinars that will be coming up in this series, as well as the blog and, of course, the launch of the actual report. Thank you so much and have a good morning, good afternoon, good, good evening, depending on which part of the world you're sitting.

Thanks so much.